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CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY

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OFFICE OF NATIONAL ESTIMATES

16 February 1951

SUBJECT: NIE-29: YUGOSLAVIA (First draft)

THE PROBLEM

To assess the capabilities and intentions of the USSR and its European Satellites with respect to action against Yugoslavia during 1951.

CONCLUSIONS

1. The Kremlin aims to eliminate the Tito Government, to replace it by a regime subservient to the USSR, and to integrate Yugoslavia politically, economically, and strategically into the European Satellite structure.

We believe that

2. Tito's regime will not be overthrown during 1951 by a Soviet-inspired coup or by internal revolt. ^{Therefore} ^{by Soviet or Satellite forces} Overt, armed invasion will be required if the Soviet objective is to be accomplished ^{during} 1951.

DOCUMENT NO. NO CHANGE IN CLASS.
~~RE~~ DECLASSIFIED
CLASS. CHANGED TO: TS
NEXT REVIEW DATE:

Approved For Release 2000/08/29 : CIA-RDP79R01012A000500080037-9

We estimate that the Yugoslav armed forces would now be capable of resisting a full-scale invasion by the armed forces of the USSR for more than a month if the defense forces were withdrawn and concentrated in the mountainous area of Bosnia, Herzegovina, and Montenegro. If the forces were not so concentrated, organized resistance by regular military forces would probably end within two weeks.

There has been in the past year a substantial 4. Indications of recent military build-up in the Satellite countries, (including increases in the size of armed forces) stockpiling, re-equipment, gasoline conservation, stepping-up of war industry, [redacted] point to greater [redacted] Al- though the Satellites now have the capability for an attack against Yugoslavia, [redacted] this build-up [redacted] neither proves nor disproves an intention to launch such an attack in 1951.

5. Against invasion by the armies of the four neighboring Satellite powers (Bulgaria, Rumania, Hungary, and Albania), organized Yugoslav resistance could be expected to continue for about three months, but probably no more than four months under the most favorable defensive conditions. In either case, guerrilla-type resistance would continue after collapse of organized resistance.

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6. [redacted] Substantial Western military assistance (in the form of weapons and equipment which could be readily integrated into Yugoslav units), [redacted] furnished ~~several months~~ well in advance of an attack, might [redacted]

~~defend Yugoslavia against a Soviet invasion.~~ Yugoslavia could ~~defend itself~~ ^{successfully} against a Soviet invasion, for considerably longer ~~than a month~~ than a month. [redacted]
[redacted] and Yugoslavia [redacted] defend itself against a Satellite invasion.

7. There is no reason to believe that the USSR, solely to attain its objective of overthrowing Tito, would run grave risks of precipitating World War III. We therefore do not believe that Soviet forces will participate directly in an attack on Yugoslavia during 1951. There is a definite possibility, however, that the Kremlin may order a Satellite invasion from which the USSR would remain technically aloof and which would therefore minimize the risk of general war.

8. If the Kremlin for other reasons decides to accept grave risks of general war during 1951, or to precipitate such a war, Yugoslavia probably will be attacked in the early stages of a Soviet European campaign.

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DISCUSSION

SOVIET OBJECTIVES WITH RESPECT TO YUGOSLAVIA

1. The Kremlin aims to eliminate the Tito Government ~~as soon as practicable~~, to replace it by a regime subservient to the USSR, and to integrate Yugoslavia politically, economically, and strategically into the European Satellite structure.

Strategic Importance

CURRENT STRENGTH AND STABILITY OF TITO'S REGIME

2. The Tito regime is stable. Internal security forces are large and efficient, and have dealt successfully with active opposition elements. Efforts of the Cominform to penetrate and undermine the regime by subversive means have thus far conspicuously failed. There is no evidence ~~nowhere~~ of effective opposition ~~anywhere~~ within the country and no serious personal rivals to Tito himself.

Nevertheless, anti-Cominform stand has won his regime
3. The ~~regime~~ is ~~stable~~ and ~~resistant~~ to the effects

~~of~~ the machinery of control but also to the con-

~~considerable popular support~~. A majority of ~~the population~~ ~~are non-Communist or even anti-Communist~~ ~~but~~ ~~friendly~~ ~~to the present regime~~ ~~and~~ ~~control by agents~~ ~~of the USSR~~. Tito's bold and successful stand in the face of

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mounting Soviet and Satellite pressure has appealed strongly to Yugoslav national pride. In the event of invasion, ^{we believe} the great majority of Yugoslavs would support Tito and ~~would carry on resistance~~ ^{as long as} militarily possible. Even the long-standing national minority ~~problems~~ ^{autonomy} in the country are relatively quiet ^{at a low point of intensity}. The improvement of Yugoslav relations with the Western Powers, and particularly with the US, has met favorable popular response.

4. There are, on the other hand, various weaknesses in the regime. ^{It is always difficult to some} A few of Tito's supporters, though seemingly loyal, may ~~in fact~~ be biding their time until an opportunity occurs for them to improve their fortunes at the expense of their leader. In the Party hierarchy, there ^{has been} ~~is some~~ criticism of both maladministration of the import program and delays in implementing plans for economic development. Hardship is prevalent among the populace, and the standard of living is lower than prewar. Resentment engendered by nationalization of the economy, ^{by} campaigns against religion, and ^{by} the development of police state techniques is still strong despite ~~the~~ ^{some} ~~recent~~ ^{relaxation} improvement in public morale resulting from the recent ~~new~~ ^{of these programs.}

5. Tito's freedom of action ^{political} in dealing with various political problems is somewhat restricted by his ambivalent ideo-

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logical position. Any considerable retreat from Communist theory or practice, and any conspicuous associations with the Western Powers, give substance to the Kremlin's contention that Tito is a traitor to Communism. *If he were to abandon Communism, he might lose* ~~associates in~~ ~~anyway they might cost Tito the support of some of his more zealous Marxist followers who are indispensable functionaries in his totalitarian regime.~~ On the other hand, if he adheres too faithfully to Communist dogma, *may antagonize* ~~he alienates the Western Powers - and~~ ~~as well as~~ ~~non-Communist elements within Yugoslavia whose support is fundamental to~~ ~~national independence is to be maintained.~~

SOVIET CAPABILITIES FOR OVERTHROWING THE TITO REGIME BY MEASURES SHORT OF WAR

6. Since the break between Tito and the Kremlin, an economic blockade has been maintained by the Soviet orbit countries against Yugoslavia. Diplomatic relations have also been virtually suspended and Yugoslav diplomats have been harassed and intimidated by Cominform agents. Tito has been portrayed as a lifelong "Fascist agent" and a willing tool of Western imperialists in a conspiracy to attack the Soviet Union. The economic and diplomatic isolation of Yugoslavia was for a time extremely dangerous to Tito's regime; if the support of his former Eastern associates had not been replaced in part

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by support from the Western Powers, Tito might have collapsed. This danger now seems to be over.

7. Attempts will undoubtedly be continued to weaken Tito's regime by the infiltration of saboteurs and subversive agents. It is impossible to estimate how many such agents may cross the frontiers. Although the Yugoslavs are not easily frightened, Moscow may also have some slight success in spreading the fear of war and invasion among those parts of the Yugoslav population who dwell close to the vulnerable frontiers. The USSR can also attempt to stage violent internal uprisings in Yugoslavia, linked with guerrilla raids from the neighboring Cominform countries. It can nourish any elements of Tito's own party with Cominform tendencies who may hope for an opportunity to succeed to power.

8. A successful assassination attempt against Tito by Cominform agents is also a continuing possibility. Tito's death would be a major blow to the regime, but would not automatically cause its collapse. Tito's lieutenants are as much committed to opposition to the Cominform as Tito himself, they would probably continue to adhere to the present principles of the regime, and Tito, as a martyr to the Cominform, might well be a source of strength to them in consolidating support within Yugoslavia. Although stresses and strains

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would eventually develop in the absence of Tito's strong personality and leadership, they would not in themselves be likely to cause the overthrow of the regime during 1951.

9. Barring Tito's assassination, we believe that none of the methods short of war which the Kremlin may use will substantially weaken the present Yugoslav regime and certainly will not overthrow it during 1951. Over a period of some three years the Kremlin has already applied to Yugoslavia the strongest economic, political, and psychological pressures of which it is capable. Tito has not been appreciably weakened by them; indeed his successful stand has apparently strengthened his position with the Yugoslav people. He is thoroughly conversant with the tricks and techniques which may be used against him. The period of his greatest vulnerability to such methods is past. It will now require armed invasion to shake his regime.

YUGOSLAV MILITARY FORCES AVAILABLE FOR DEFENSE

10. The Yugoslav Army has a current strength of approximately 275,000 men and could be expanded in 30 days to 600,000 men organized in 40 divisions. Yugoslavia has a further mobilization potential up to 1,000,000 men six months after commencing mobilization, but current and future availability of weapons

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would restrict arms for additional units to light infantry weapons and some field artillery. Yugoslav weapons are generally of good quality but heterogenous, with Soviet and German World War II models predominating. The outstanding weaknesses in equipment are in tanks, anti-tank weapons, and anti-aircraft artillery. Yugoslav effectiveness would decline rapidly in the event of hostilities because of inability to replace material lost in combat. The Yugoslav Air Force totals approximately 650 planes, but is hampered by a shortage of spare parts. The Yugoslav Navy is small and inefficient but is nevertheless capable of successfully opposing any Satellite naval operation.

11. Yugoslav forces are capable of good combat performance, particularly if committed to the defense of the mountainous area of Bosnia, Hercegovina, and Montenegro rather than the Danubian Plain. Many of the officers and non-commissioned officers had combat experience in World War II and since then have had fairly good training.

12. Under present circumstances, only limited improvement can be expected in Yugoslav capabilities during 1951. The Yugoslavs are currently attempting to purchase arms and equipment from foreign sources, and some material, such as small arms and light artillery, is being manufactured locally.

Production is slow, however, and it will be some time before new equipment can be produced in significant quantities. Western military assistance in the form of weapons and equipment which could readily be integrated into Yugoslav units would materially strengthen Yugoslav defensive capabilities if the program were commenced several months before an invasion. Combat capabilities could be further increased by the acquisition of certain items of equipment, such as anti-tank weapons and rocket launchers from the West, but only after Yugoslav personnel had been trained in their use. Major assistance would be required to bring the Yugoslav Air Force to equality with the combined air forces of neighboring Satellites.

SOVIET AND SATELLITE ARMED FORCES AVAILABLE FOR INVASION OF YUGOSLAVIA

13. Soviet forces presently disposed in countries adjacent to Yugoslavia consist of six line divisions--two each in Austria, Hungary, and Rumania--and are insufficient by themselves for a successful invasion of Yugoslavia. Additional forces could, however, readily be drawn from the USSR to make up an adequate force for an invasion.

14. The armies of Albania, Hungary, Rumania, and Bulgaria now total approximately 440,000 men, but, with partial

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mobilization over a period of at least 30 days, could be increased to 925,000 men organized in 47 line divisions, 11 combat brigades, and supporting independent regiments. Additional equipment would be required, but this could readily be supplied by the USSR by the end of April 1951. The armed forces of these Satellites are now estimated to be equipped with approximately 1,000 tanks, and reinforcements could be obtained on short notice from the estimated 700 tanks now with Soviet forces in these Satellites. Satellite air forces total approximately 900 combat aircraft; their combat effectiveness is low. Satellite naval forces are negligible.

15. The fighting qualities of these forces would be at least good in comparison with Yugoslav forces, particularly in successful offensive operations. Bulgarian and Rumanian forces are the best trained and equipped of the four Satellite armies, but all Satellite forces would have the major advantage of extensive and timely Soviet logistical support for an invasion of Yugoslavia.

Build up

VULNERABILITY OF YUGOSLAVIA TO INVASION

16. Most of the areas along Yugoslavia's extended frontiers are highly vulnerable to invasion from the neighboring

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Satellite states. Northwestern Yugoslavia, including Slovenia and northern Croatia, could be quickly cut off from the rest of the country by a drive southward from Hungary through Zagreb and toward Fiume. The country north of the Sava River between Zagreb and the Danube could also be easily invaded at a number of points along the Hungarian frontier. The Danubian Plain north of Belgrade is especially vulnerable to armored attacks from either Hungary or Rumania. The Belgrade area, although partially protected on the north by the Danube, would be hard to defend against attacks across the Danubian Plain or from the south through the Morava River valley. Yugoslav Macedonia could be cut off by attacks from Bulgaria and Albania directed toward Skoplje.

17. The large mountainous area which includes Bosnia, Hercegovina, and Montenegro is suitable for the organization and maintenance of a strong defense. However, this area would be dependent for outside supplies on several moderately good Adriatic Sea ports, access to which could be threatened by Albanian air and naval bases on the eastern shore of the Straits of Otrano. The mountainous defensive area would also be vulnerable to enemy penetrations from the directions of Zagreb and Fiume if such penetrations were undertaken before the organization of defensive positions. Several points

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along the Dalmatian coast might be vulnerable to amphibious attacks launched from Albanian bases.

18. The industrial centers of Yugoslavia are located in the lowland border areas that would be overrun soon after hostilities had commenced. The better agricultural lands are in the same region and food would become a critical problem in the early stages of the campaign. Food and munitions are now being stored in the mountainous regions, but these would be exhausted rapidly without large-scale and timely Western assistance. The main ports of entry and transportation routes through which supplies from abroad might be obtained also are highly vulnerable. Rail and motor routes from Trieste and Fiume would, in the event of an attack from Hungary, probably be cut off at an early stage. Road and rail routes from Salonika are vulnerable to ground attack from Bulgaria and Albania. The only transportation facilities likely to remain in operation during extended hostilities are the ports, roads, and railways along the Dalmatian coast. Even these are of limited capacity and are vulnerable to air attack.

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PROBABLE OUTCOME OF A SOVIET OR SATELLITE INVASION OF YUGOSLAVIA

19. Soviet armed forces could successfully invade Yugoslavia, overcome organized resistance, and eventually bring guerrilla opposition under control. Under present circumstances, it is estimated that organized Yugoslav resistance could be destroyed within one month. The elimination of guerrilla opposition would take considerably longer and would depend on the extent of outside aid to the guerrillas and the scale of the Soviet effort. Timely Western aid could considerably lengthen the period of resistance to a Soviet invasion and, at the same time, make such an invasion more costly to the USSR.

20. Under present circumstances, the Yugoslav armed forces are incapable of successfully opposing an invasion by the combined forces of Bulgaria, Rumania, Hungary, and Albania. It is estimated that organized resistance against this force would continue for about three months and probably no more than four months under the most favorable defensive conditions. Guerrilla resistance would, of course, continue beyond that period. Substantial Western military assistance, if commenced several months prior to an invasion, could enable Yugoslavia to defend itself against a combined Satellite invasion.

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PROBABILITY OF SOVIET OR SATELLITE INVASION OF YUGOSLAVIA
DURING 1951

23. Tito's regime is unlikely to be overthrown by any small-scale or surreptitious operation. To insure the destruction of the regime, there would have to be a full-scale invasion, either by all the neighboring Satellite armies, by some of them with overt assistance of Soviet armed forces, or by Soviet forces alone. Indeed, if Tito should receive substantial amounts of military equipment from the West prior to an invasion, he can probably stand off any attack in which the USSR itself does not openly join.

22. The Kremlin must recognize that direct Soviet participation would involve very grave risk of general war. We do not believe that the Kremlin is willing to accept this risk for the sole purpose of attaining its objectives against Yugoslavia.

23. The Kremlin, however, might estimate that it could considerably lessen the risk of general war by initiating an attack by Satellite forces with the USSR remaining technically aloof. The Kremlin might estimate that the USSR could insure the success of such an attack through the covert provision of material and perhaps "volunteer" personnel. The Kremlin might hope that fear of direct Soviet intervention would prevent or at least reduce the effectiveness of Western counteraction.

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~~The scope of recent Satellite military and logistical preparations in the area and the intensity of the Cominform propaganda campaign against the Tito regime suggest that the USSR has been laying the groundwork for such a course of action.~~

24. A major consideration in a Soviet decision to initiate a Satellite attack on Yugoslavia would be the Soviet estimate of Yugoslav defensive capabilities, the amount of Western military assistance Tito is likely to receive, and the offensive capabilities of the new Satellite armies. At present, the balance between Satellite and Yugoslav strength is still sufficiently even that the USSR, in launching a Satellite attack, would have to face the possibility of Satellite reverses and the resulting necessity of choosing between two alternatives that would probably be unacceptable to the Kremlin: permit the defeat of the Satellite armies or commit Soviet forces directly. We do not believe the Kremlin would be willing at this time to accept these risks for the sole purpose of attaining its objectives in Yugoslavia.

25. If, however, consideration of its worldwide power position should lead Moscow to accept grave risks of World War III, or to precipitate it, during 1951, we believe that Yugoslavia would probably be attacked in the early stages of the Soviet campaign in Europe, primarily in order to eliminate the potential flanking threat it presents.

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23. The probability of a Soviet and/or Satellite attack must be assessed in the light the considerations presented in the foregoing, which demonstrated that no small scale or surreptitious operation could overthrow Tito's regime; a full scale military invasion would be required, the degree of Soviet participation in which might be considered in three categories.

a. The initial effort might employ Satellite armies only, with arms and other covert assistance staff and logistical supplied by the Soviet Union. While Moscow undoubtedly estimates that even a move by the Satellites alone entails considerable risk of US intervention and, at least ultimately, World War III, Moscow may feel that such an effort would still leave room for diplomatic maneuver with the Western Nations. The Soviet might consider such a move feasible, not only toward the attainment of objectives in Yugoslavia, but also as a veiled ultimatum to Western European nations, should present diplomatic efforts through its CFM proposals fail to prevent or inhibit satisfactorily the rearmament of Western Europe. The Soviet Union may feel that such a distinct threat, at a time when Western Europe is relatively defenseless, may be combined with "neutrality" offers to subvert rearmament plans. Such a move by the Satellites, all circumstances taken into account, must be considered a distinct possibility.

b. Tito, however, with a timely receipt of sufficient equipment from the West (see par. 21) could probably stand off such an attack. In this event Satellite armies might be augmented by trained Russian manpower in the guise of "volunteers" or "citizens" of one of the Satellites. This would represent Soviet acceptance of still graver

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risks of World War III but might occur either as an extension of (a) or, ~~less probably~~, as a deliberate decision at the outset.

(c). Only if Moscow intends to accept the vertical certainty of World War III in pursuit of its world strategy would full and overt Soviet forces be employed, either as an extension of the situation progressively generated by (a) and (b) or as the result as a decision ab initio to precipitate World War III. In either event there are several good reasons for starting the action in Yugoslavia: to eliminate the largest single opposing military force in being in continental Europe, to eliminate a potential flanking threat presented by a hostile Yugoslavia, and to improve the strategic position for further action against Greece and the general Mediterranean region; to encourage political and military capitulation of a relatively defenseless Western Europe without extensive military operations being required, in the hopes thereby of reducing Russian occupation difficulties in Western Europe and of keeping Western European industrial potential more intact for Soviet use against the US.

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23. The Tito regime cannot be overthrown by small-scale or surreptitious operations. A full-scale invasion, either by all of the Satellite armies, or by some of them with the overt assistance of Soviet forces, will be necessary. And if Yugoslavia receives substantial materiel aid from the West, the direct participation of Soviet forces probably would be required to insure Tito's downfall. The Kremlin must recognize that such Soviet participation would involve very grave risk of US intervention, and perhaps of general war. We do not believe that the Kremlin is willing to accept this risk ~~EXX~~ for the sole purpose of attaining its objectives against Yugoslavia.

24. The Kremlin might estimate that an attack by Satellite forces from which the USSR stood ~~technically aloof~~ would involve considerably less risk of US intervention and of general war. The Kremlin might further estimate that the USSR could safely furnish sufficient support to such an attack, in the form ~~(before Western military aid could become effective)~~ of material and perhaps "volunteer" personnel, to insure its success. Such a Soviet undertaking might be accompanied by a campaign of diplomacy and propaganda implying a Soviet desire that the conflict be localized, but suggesting that Western assistance to Tito would provoke direct Soviet intervention. The

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Kremlin might hope thus to deter effective action by any of the Western Powers, or, failing this, to force the US to act without united Western support. Although the early success of such action would be far from certain, and although considerable risk of general war would be involved, this course of Soviet action must be considered a definite possibility.

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